

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 CU-04 EUR-25 RSR-01 NIC-01 /059 W  
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R 251033 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO USIA WASHDC  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9487

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E. O. 11652: GDS

REF: USIA 7850

SUMMARY: NEW SOVIET CULTURAL CENTER OPENS IN DACCA  
AFTER TEN MONTHS OF CONSTRUCTION. CEREMONIES MARRED BY  
ELECTRICAL FAILURE AND EMBARRASING DELAY IN STARTING HOUSE  
GENERATOR. BENGALI ATTENDANCE SURPRISINGLY LOW AND WITH  
EXCEPTION OF GUEST SPEAKERS RELATIVELY UNDISTINGUISHED.  
OCCASION NOT VERY IMPRESSIVE. PRESS COVERAGE NEXT DAY  
QUITE MODERATE. NO TV COVERAGE.

1. SOVIET CULTURAL CENTER, OR "HOUSE OF SOVIET CULTURE" AS  
OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED, WAS FORMALLY OPENED FRIDAY EVENING,  
APRIL 20. PARTICIPATION AT INAUGURAL CEREMONIES WAS BY  
INVITATION ONLY. GUESTS NUMBERED APPROXIMATELY 190  
BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

A. ABOUT 40 BENGALIERS; 10 YOUNG MEN AND 5 WOMEN, ALL  
MEMBERS CHHATRA (STUDENT) UNION OR NAP (MUZAFFAR) PARTY;  
MONI SINGH AND FOUR OFFICERS OF COMMUNIST PARTY BANGLADESH;  
10 NAP (M) FUNCTIONNARIES; 5 PRESS REPRESENTATIVES AND 5 TO 7  
UNIDENTIFIED.

B. PRESS COUNSELOR AND MRS. BANNERJEE OF INDIAN HIGH  
COMMISSION.

C. MYSELF AND MRS. GRESHAM. NO OTHER WESTERN DIPLOMATS

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HAD BEEN INVITED. I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF BRINGING MISS EDMONDSON WITH US.

D. REMAINDER COMPOSED OF EASTERN BLOC CHIEFS OF MISSION AND SENIOR STAFFS AND WIVES, RUSSIAN EMBASSY, AND ABOUT A DOZEN OFFICERS AND PETTY OFFICERS OF RUSSIAN NAVY FROM CHITTAGONG.

2. PROGRAM WAS METICULOUSLY DETAILED ON INVITATION:

5:30-6:00 GUESTS ARRIVE

6:00 - ARRIVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR A. FOMIN

6:01 - ARRIVAL OF CHIEF GUEST OF HONOR, NAZRUL- ISLAM,  
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY

6:01-6:15 - TOUR OF HOUSE OF CULTURE BY CHIEF GUEST OF HONOR

6:15-6:30 - LIGHT REFRESHMENTS ( NON- ALCOHOLIC)

6:30-7:20 - INAUGURATION IN AUDITORIUM: ADDRESSES BY

CHIEF GUEST OF HONOR, AMBASSADOR FOMIN, AND  
VICE- CHANCELLOR OF DACCA UNIVERSITY, DR. ABDUL  
MATIN CHOWDHURY

7:20-7:30 - INTERVAL

7:30-9:30 - FILM SHOWING " STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF LENIN"

PROGRAM PROCEEDED ON FAIRLY ACCURATE SCHEDULE UNTIL GUESTS SEATED

IN AUDITORIUM FOR SPEECHES. THEN

THE ELECTRICITY FAILED; THE

AUXILIARY GENERATOR WOULDN'T START AND WE REMAINED IN DARKNESS  
FOR 35 MINUTES. SEVERAL BENGALIES LEFT. CHIEF OF CULTURAL

DEPARTMENT, YURI KATON, APPEARED BRIEFLY ON STAGE HOLDING CANDLE,  
ITS LIGHT FLICKERING EERILY OVER LARGE SKETCH OF LENIN'S HEAD ON

THE SCREEN BEHIND THE SPEAKER'S TABLE. PERSPIRING HEAVILY, HE  
PROFUSELY APOLOGIZED FOR " TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE" AND BEGGED  
FOR OUR PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING. BY 7:05 SOVIET NAVAL RATINGS  
FINALLY GOT GENERATOR WORKING AND THE LIGHTS AND AIR CONDITIONING  
CAME ON. SPEAKING IN BENGALI FOR 20 MINUTES, NAZRUL ISLAM LAUDED  
SOVIET UNION FOR HELPING ACHIEVE BANGLADESH INDEPENDENCE AND SPOKE  
OF GREATNESS OF LENIN, REFERRING TO 103 RD ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

ON THE 22 ND. AMBASSADOR FOMIN, SPEAKING IN RUSSIAN INITIALLY,  
UNTIL HE DECIDED TO LET HIS INTERPRETER READ THE REMAINDER OF HIS

SPEECH IN ENGLISH, LAUDED CULTURAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO  
NATIONS AND INFORMED THE AUDIENCE OF THE ENORMOUS POPULARITY OF  
BENGALI LITERATURE IN THE USSR. NEWLY APPOINTED CHANCELLOR  
CHOWDHURY, A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PH. D IN PHYSICS, SPOKE  
IN ENGLISH TO MOST GUESTS' RELIEF, AND BRIEFLY, EXTOLLING SOVIET-

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BANGLADESH FRIENDSHIP AND HAILING THE ROLE OF LENIN " THAT SON OF  
THE POOR WORKING CLASSES," WHO CHANGED HISTORY.

MAJORITY OF GUESTS DEPARTED DURING THE INTERVAL. ONLY ABOUT 30  
PEOPLE, MOSTLY RUSSIANS, REMAINED FOR THE TWO HOURS OF LENIN  
ON FILM.

3. TWO STORY BUILDING HOUSING CENTER IS LOCATED ON DHANMONDI

LAKE, ALMOST DIRECTLY IN REAR OF AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. ADDRESS IS 510 DHANMONDI ROAD 7. GROUND FLOOR CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING:

- A. SMALL RECEPTIONIST'S OFFICE.
- B. SMALL BUT WELL-STOCKED DRINKING LOUNGE WITH BAR AND 5 STOOLS, TABLE, AND 4 CHAIRS.
- C. L-SHAPED EXHIBITS ROOM WHICH DISPLAYED 16 LARGE PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOVIET INDUSTRIAL SCENES, 50 TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE USSR CELEBRATIONS, AND A WORLD WAR II VICTORY POSTER. IT HOLDS ABOUT 125 PEOPLE IN A PINCH; IS CARPETED, AND FURNISHED WITH A SOFA, TWO CHAIRS, COFFEE TABLE AND A RADIO- PHONOGRAPH CONSOLE.
- D. 250 SEAT THEATER, AIR CONDITIONED; 8' BY 15' SCREEN RECESSED ON STAGE 20' BY 10'. PROJECTION ROOM HAS THREE PROJECTORS ( ONE FOR SLIDES) AND FILM RACKS CONTAINING OVER 100 REELS.
- E. MUSIC ROOM, 20' BY 30', DECORATED IN ORIENTAL STYLE WITH CARPETS, DIVANS AND POLISHED BRASSWARE. NO SIGN OR SOUND OF MUSIC OR POSSIBLE SOURCE.
- F. APARTMENT FOR CULTURAL CHIEF KATON ( FIRST SECRETARY RANK).

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9488

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SECOND STORY:

A. LIBRARY; ABOUT 40' BY 25'; ABOUT 2000 BOOKS (UNCATALOGUED) ARRANGED BY DEWEY; SOME TITLES IN 3 TO 10 COPIES EACH; SUBJECTS ARE POLITICS, LITERATURE (INCLUDING PRE-REVOLUTION); SCIENCE, ECONOMICS, MEDICINE AND 45 VOLUMES OF LENIN'S COLLECTED WORKS. ALL BOOKS IN ENGLISH EXCEPT ABOUT 250 BENGALI TRANSLATIONS OF VARIOUS TITLES IN EACH SUBJECT FIELD.

B. THREE OFFICES; ONE FOR KATON; ONE SHARED BY HIS TWO DEPUTIES, SECOND SECRETARIES VALERY SHAGAYEV AND YURI TUMANOV; THIRD PROBABLY FOR RUSSIAN TEACHER MILTOV AND/ OR CULTURAL OFFICER FOR "POLITICAL AFFAIRS" A. M. PERSHIN.

4. CENTER IS NOW OPEN TO PUBLIC FIVE DAYS A WEEK; HOURS 8:30-1:00; 5:00-6:30 OR 7:00 DEPENDING ON BUSINESS.

5. FIRST MAJOR ACTIVITY WILL BE SIX- DAY FILM FESTIVAL COMMENCING APRIL 25 WITH BENGALI, INDIAN, BULGARIAN, EAST GERMAN, POLISH AND SOVIET FILMS, A DIFFERENT ONE EACH NIGHT. SEATING IS BY INVITATION ONLY FROM THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DACCA CINE ART CIRCLE.

GRESHAM

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\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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